

Quincy, Sol.

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New CIA Boss

President Kennedy's selection of John A. McCone as the new head of the central intelligence agency, to succeed Allen W. Dulles next month, is not as surprising, on second thought, as it seemed at first.

McCone has no background of actual, wartime espionage experience such as the scholarly and seemingly mild Allen Dulles engaged in during World war II. But the secretive CIA needs as its director, above all, a man of executive ability and experience, with a tough inner nature.

There are, after all, plenty of experienced professionals now in the CIA. McCone needs to know little of modern espionage and intelligence methods to become a most effective director of the agency. He has demonstrated executive ability in various roles. He displayed plenty of fortitude during his years as chairman of the atomic energy commission. During that same period he undoubtedly shared secrets of as great importance as those to which he will become privy as director of the CIA.

As far as experience goes, one might recall that a successful general need not have had experience as a foot soldier. For that matter, Dwight D. Eisenhower, who will surely rank in history as one of the greatest of American generals, never had actual combat experience in the sense of leading men on a field of battle.

Less probably is known about the important and sensitive agency which McCone is now to head than any other arm of the government. No one knows how many agents and other employes the CIA employs, other than key officials. Its appropriations are as secret as its operations—buried and disguised in other appropriations.

Its activities, of course, are not all cloak and dagger stuff, although it is presumed and has been hinted that there is plenty of this. Not all of its work is adventurous and exciting. Probably a great percentage of its employes are simply specialists in one field or another, engaged in evaluation of facts and incidents readily available but not easily translated into information of vital value.

McCone, of course, will be wished every success in this new and exciting post he is to assume. And the nation's thanks must go to the man he succeeds, Allen W. Dulles, who has done much during his years as regards to build the CIA into an organization which has won increasing respect from the intelligence services of other nations which have had much more experience in this field.

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